

CHOTEAU, MONTANA 59422

Seven Lazy P Guest Ranch Deep Canyon

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

My name is Chuck Blixrud, and my wife, Sharon, and I own and operate the Seven Lazy P, Deep Canyon Ranch in the Rocky Mountain Front west of Choteau. Today, we are here to strongly support SB 400.

We have been in the business of accommodating guests from around the world, and all walks of life since 1958. We are now entering our 53rd year in the dude ranching and wilderness outfitting business.

Throughout that time, we have experienced many changes in the hunting industry. We have seen the ebb and flow of hunters coming to Montana to experience a true wilderness experience, to spend time with their friends and as the saying goes, "set their compass straight again".

With the passage of I 161 last fall, which did away with the Outfitter Sponsored Big Game license, was a big step towards destabilizing the outfitting industry here in Montana.

Our success in our small business depends upon our reputation and the continuing return of our hunters and our guests, it depends upon the quality of our equipment, our horses and mules, and our services rendered. Ask any outfitter, and he will tell you that your client base is a direct result of good management and quality service. After I 161, now all we can tell him is "good luck, my friend".

Choteau's main street is hurting just like other small town main streets, and business from our hunters and summer guests is always welcome. We prefer to purchase, and we try hard to





hire locally, where we know the people, the families, and the communities.

We very much support Senator Vincent's amendment that states these additional 2000 licenses must be used in designated wilderness areas. That an elk only license be issued for \$150 less, and that remaining deer license must be sold to someone else, with 25% of the cost of that deer license be allocated to the Block Management program.

You will not see increased growth of wilderness outfitting because of this action. We, as outfitters must adhere to Forest Service regulation, and use only our allocated service days which have been in place since the early 1980's.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today, and offer my encouragement for the passage of this Bill.

